



NEWS & REPORTS

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Howard seeks increase in school support

Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard will ask lawmakers to increase funding for salaries, shift dollars to remediation programs, and restore funding for state mandated teacher mentor program.

Howard submitted the public schools budget request for 2004-05 to the state's division of finan-

cial management in September. The State Board of Education was scheduled to review the budget in October.

She described the budget as "somber" and said if approved, it would mean tight budget for local school districts.

"This budget is aimed at maintaining current efforts in local

schools during tight economic times," Howard said. "And it recognizes that we will have to re-prioritize some funding to supporting students who struggle."

Revenues

The budget request seeks an increase of about \$42.8 million in state general funds that will be off-

set by an expected \$13.9 million decrease in dedicated funds.

The budget also estimates increases in lottery and federal funds, which are spent for specific purposes.

Growth

The State Department of Education estimates growth of

about 200 support units for 2004-05, reflecting increases in enrollment in charter schools and the state's urban areas.

The budget also anticipates more new charter schools, which create additional support units.

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STANDARDS

Districts meet goals for implementation

Idaho's \$12 million investment in standards is paying off as nearly all districts reported that at the end of the 2002-03 school year they had completed the alignment of local curriculum to state standards.

Three years ago, Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard asked the Legislature to fund the vital step between setting standards for learning and testing whether students have met the standards.

"We were fortunate in Idaho that lawmakers recognized schools needed this support to incorporate state expectations into local instruction before students and schools would be held accountable for knowing the standards," she said. "There is much work still to do to help students, but we should celebrate the successful completion of this first stage."

The state's achievement standard effort moves into a second phase this year, as the last of state standards implementation funds - \$1 million - will be directed toward training administrators.

Deputy Superintendent Mary Ann Ranells of the State Department of Education said districts across the state would be focusing this year on data from state assessments to look for gaps in instruction and areas that might need attention.

To help districts, the department will sponsor six regional data analysis academies in November.

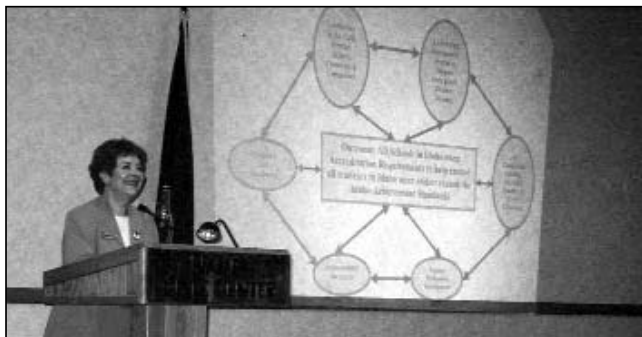
Howard also will ask lawmakers to fund remediation programs to provide schools the resources to help students who are identified as basic or below basic on state assessments.

"The logical next step is to move away

from support for teachers to providing support for students who are behind," Howard said.

The State Department of Education has produced a variety of materials to assist teachers and administrators in incorporating standards into local instruction. Some of those materials include:

- * Sample ISAT test items in reading, math and language arts
- * Idaho State Aligned Learning Continuum
- * Assessment Mapped to the Idaho State Achievement Standards in math and language arts
- * Courses of study aligned to achievement standards
- * End of course assessments
- * Training modules for standards implementation
- * Idaho Curriculum Guides.



Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard reviews the 'big picture' of education with superintendents and charter school administrators at the State Department of Education's annual back-to-school meeting.

Fall Data Analysis Academies

This two-day workshop is free. However because space is limited, registration is required. For more information visit:

www.sde.state.id.us/admin/standards/

The schedule is:

- Region I Nov. 3-4, Post Falls
- Region II Nov. 5-6, Moscow
- Region VI Nov. 10-11, Idaho Falls
- Region V Nov. 12-13, Pocatello
- Region IV Nov. 17-18, Twin Falls
- Region III Nov. 19-20, Boise

Comment sought on school, teacher new rules

Requiring passage of the 10th-grade Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) for graduation is just one of several rule changes proposed by the State Board of Education for public comment in October.

The package of rules has changes that affect schools and changes that affect teachers. The school rules lay the foundation for a state accountability that primarily reflects requirements necessary for No Child Left Behind. The teacher rules reflect some changes required by NCLB as well as other state changes.

A statewide public hearing is set for Oct. 16 on the proposed rules and written comment will be accepted until Oct. 22. The draft rules are available at: www.idahoboardofed.org. The board will consider the rules for final approval in November. The proposals would then be sent to lawmakers in January 2004.

Below are summaries of some of the changes proposed:

Accountability

Graduation: The proposal that has garnered the most attention in the media is the recommendation that passage of the 10th grade ISAT be added to the state's graduation requirements beginning with the Class of 2006.

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Oct. 16 Hearing sites

Public and educators may comment on proposed rules on Oct. 16 from 7 to 9 p.m. MT and 6 to 8 p.m. PT at the following sites:

Boise: J.R. Williams Building, East Conference Room
Coeur d'Alene: North Idaho College, Winton Hall, Room

Idaho Falls: Eastern Idaho Technical College, John E. Christopherson Building, Room 371

Lewiston: Lewis-Clark State College, Sam Glenn Complex, Room 50

Pocatello: Idaho State University, Library/Media Center, B06

Twin Falls: College of Southern Idaho, Shields Building, Room 209.

Written comments

Mail comments by Oct. 22 to Jimmi Sommer at the State Board of Education, 650 W. State St., P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0037.

Deadline Oct. 14 for AYP appeals to state

Schools have until Oct. 14 to submit information to correct their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) information for 2002-03.

The corrected information will be used to make the schools' final AYP determination for 2002-03.

This is the first year for the state to make an AYP determination for all public schools.

Schools and the public can view electronic reports at www.sde.state.id.us/admin/ayp/ that show which of the state's 36 schools participation and proficiency goals may have been missed.

What is Adequate Yearly Progress?

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measures three components:

1. Participation: Whether 95% of students are tested.
2. Performance: Whether students meet the reading and math proficiency targets.
3. Progress: Whether a school moves toward a third academic goal (graduation rate

for high schools and language arts proficiency for elementary and middle schools).

Component No. 1: Students tested

The first step to determine if AYP was made is to measure whether 95% of students were tested. The tests Idaho uses are the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and the Idaho Alternative Assessment (IAA) given in the spring. Schools and districts also must meet the 95% tested goal for specific groups of students including: Economically disadvantaged,

Limited English proficient, Special education; and Ethnicity: African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American/Alaska Native.

Component No. 2: Reading and math proficiency

To make AYP, schools and districts must meet the state's goals for percent of students proficient on the reading and

math portions of the ISAT.

Each of the groups of students listed above also must meet state goals. The State Board of Education has identified annual and intermediate reading and math goals.

Schools and districts are expected to, as a minimum, meet the intermediate goals and use the annual goals as a yearly target.

A "safe harbor" option is available for schools that do not meet reading and math goals, but have made substantial gains in the percent of students reaching proficiency.

Component No. 3: Progress toward a third academic goal

The academic indicator for elementary and middle schools is the percentage of students proficient and advanced on the language arts portion of the ISAT.

No state target or goal has been set for this indicator.

Instead a baseline will be created for each school and dis-

trict based on its percentage of students and groups of students who are proficient.

Later this year, the State Board of Education is expected to set a growth target for this component.

The third academic indicator for high schools is graduation rate.

Once Idaho is able to report graduation information by the specific groups listed above, it will be added to high school AYP determination.

In the meantime, the 10th Grade Language Arts ISAT will be used as a "proxy" or in place of graduation.

No state target or goal has been set for this indicator.

Instead a baseline will be created for each school and district based on its percentage of students and groups of students who are proficient.

Later this year, the State Board of Education is expected to set a growth target for this component as well as for graduation.

Idaho school earns national attention

Blue Ribbon award comes after years of focusing on improvement

By Rachel Tutko
for News & Reports

Turning a low-performing school into a high-performing school isn't easy and doesn't happen overnight, but one Boise school highlights how it can be done well.

In September, William Howard Taft Elementary was named "Blue Ribbon School," a prestigious award given by the U.S. Department of Education. The award recognizes high-achieving schools that serve large numbers of students living in poverty. Taft, a Title I school with more than 70 percent of its students living in poverty, was the only Idaho school recognized and one of 214 honored nationwide.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard nominated the school for the award, and said: "Taft exemplifies the value of the school improvement process in that it focuses efforts on ensuring that children are reaching high expectations for learning regardless of their backgrounds."

The award highlights years of reform in the school that required changes at every level from the appearance of the school to classroom instruction.

"Our scores four or five years ago were the lowest in the district," Principal Susan Williamson said. "Now, we are above the state requirement for IRI (Idaho Reading Indicator) in grades K-2." Taft's scores on the Direct Writing Assessment also have seen dramatic improvement, from 28 percent proficient in 1999-2000, to 84 percent proficient this past year, well above the district average of 71 percent proficient. In addition, the school's Title I students far outperform their counterparts across the state, with numbers that mirror and in some cases exceed the state average for all students.

Parents are thrilled with the results. "People used to ask me why I sent my children here," said Rhonda Gibson, a Taft alum, whose three children attended the school. "And now people are transferring their kids to Taft. It's been a wonderful change. We've always had an excellent staff, and wonderful principals, but we didn't have the tools."

The tools came from a school



William Howard Taft Principal Susan Williamson and first-grade teacher Katie McCarvel answer questions from students at the Boise school. In September, the school was notified that it received the prestigious "Blue Ribbon" designation from the U.S. Department of Education.

improvement effort that recognized to boost student performance would take more than examining test scores.

"You can't focus on results without focusing on the processes that bring results," Williamson said.

Changing climate

The reforms started six years ago when Williamson joined the school. One of the first areas the staff tackled was improving the school's climate. Taft had a reputation of being a tough school, where the teachers struggled to earn the students' respect. Creating a structured environment was essential, Williamson said, to making the school a friendly, safe place.

Today, visitors to the school feel like they are visiting a home. The front lobby is a cozy sitting area, with a couch, carpet, and wallpaper. With the wood wainscoting, it has been made to resemble a living room, warm and inviting. Down the hallways, student artwork hangs at a level where children can best see it.

Improving discipline

Another key piece in Taft's reform effort was weaving character instruction into the school's curriculum.

Sandi Haines, who has taught first grade at Taft for the past 15 years, serves as chairman of the school's Character Academy. Students have six weeks of direct instruction each semester. During that time, they are taught the "Golden Rules." The Golden Rules emphasize good citizenship and strengthen social skills with sayings such as "Sharing kind words is one way to help improve another's day," and "Inviting others to join in and play shows everyone a better way."

Visitors to the school will see the rules written on classroom chalkboards, and posted around the school as a constant reminder to students. During the character instruction, parents are sent tips every week to support the lessons and to promote a strong partnership between school and home.

The academy is working, and during its first year alone, led to a dramatic decrease in discipline referrals to the office. Now the school sees fewer than six suspensions a year.

Improving instruction

In addition to improving the school's climate and discipline, reforming Taft required a new approach to instruction. Haines says Williamson brought a differ-

About the award

With the passage of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, the criteria for the federal Blue Ribbon Schools Program was changed.

The award recognizes schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance in reading and mathematics to high levels on state assessments.

It also recognizes schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent in reading and mathematics on state tests.

Contact

For more information about the Blue Ribbon Award program or School Improvement Planning contact Shannon Page of the State Department of Education at (208) 332-6942.

ent focus to the school.

"We fondly call her the Data Queen," Haines said. "It's the assessments and the data that drive our instruction."

Williamson credited a partnership with the Pesky Learning Center to building staff data analysis skills. Through this partnership, she was able to bring Taft's teachers together for a collaborative team building process. Together, they learned how to look at data in 30 minutes, and use it to fine-tune their instruction. Now school staff look to tools beyond state tests to gauge student learning.

Weekly assessments allow teachers to evaluate the effect of instruction by identifying students who need to be re-taught a lesson or those who need enrichment.

Planning to improve

Williamson and her staff admit that school improvement is a process that is ongoing and requires a constant reassessing of the data and programs to make sure that teachers and kids have the tools they need to succeed.

"We can not do it alone. Some of the tools and strategies must be provided by the district, the state, and the federal government. It's all part of an educational system," Williamson said.

Key to it all is the belief that all kids can learn, Williamson said. "Kids want to be successful, and parents want them to be successful."

New faces at the State Department of Education

Delgado takes LEP position

Maria Delgado joins the State Department of Education as its limited English proficient/Title III specialist.



Delgado previously worked for the Nampa School District, where she taught bilingual education for the past five years.

Delgado earned her bachelor degree in elementary education, bilingual and multicultural emphasis, from Boise State University.

She has received several awards, including the 2000 United Nations Human Right Day Award, presented by Idaho Voices of Faith, and the NASA sponsored Society for Advancement of Chicano and Native Americans in Science Teacher Workshop in Washington, D.C.

Joyner serves as reading coordinator

Stacey Joyner joins the State Department of Education as its reading coordinator.



Joyner brings 11 years of pre K-3 classroom experience, and several years experiences as reading specialist.

Joyner grew up in Idaho and graduated from Pocatello High School. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Idaho State University and a master's in curriculum and instruction, with a focus in reading.

At the department, Joyner will coordinate the state's reading initiative, including the Idaho Reading Indicator, the Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Course, and intervention programs. She also will work with Dr. Lynette Hill and Marybeth Flachbart on professional development projects.

Schorzman fills gifted, talented position

Val Schorzman joins the State Department of Education as its gifted and talented specialist.



Prior to joining the department, Schorzman worked for a district in Texas, where she coordinated its gifted and talented program and teacher training. She also worked closely with the universities to provide services to gifted and talented children.

Schorzman earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in elementary education, and her educational doctorate in Educational Leadership.

As the gifted and talented specialist, Schorzman will work with districts on programs, assist in state planning, work with universities, and coordinate state conferences and workshops.

Toney hired for new certification position

Patricia Toney joins the State Department of Education as the professional standards specialist.



This is a new position, funded in part by an increase in certification fees, and will focus on professional development standards and the approval process for teacher preparation programs.

Prior to the joining the State Department of Education, Toney spent four years at the Office of the State Board of Education, as the Teacher Policy Coordinator for Idaho's Maximizing Opportunities for Students and Teachers (MOST) initiative.

Toney is a Boise native and earned a bachelor's degree in teaching from University of Idaho, and her master's and doctorate degrees from Boise State University. Her doctorate is in curriculum and instruction, with an emphasis on school reform.

Zaske joins child nutrition programs

Jean Zaske joins the State Department of Education as a child nutrition specialist. Zaske has 16 years



experience as a dietician with the Idaho Dairy Council, where she worked with schools and districts conducting trainings and workshops for food service personnel and teachers.

Zaske earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point and a master's degree from Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland. She is a registered dietician.

In the past, she worked with the department on the statewide breakfast and the Power Panther campaigns. Zaske will coordinate trainings for schools and districts and manage the school commodities program, which shift to a web-based system in October.

Budget

Continued from Page 1

In 2002-03, charter school support units generated \$1 new units. For the current school year, charter school support units are expected to create 100 new support units.

Salaries

The largest portion of the state's public school budget is the line item for salaries and the state paid benefits for school staff. Howard is seeking a 2.7 increase in salary funds to cover growth in support units and a 1-percent increase in the base salaries for teachers, administrators, and support staff. The base salary increase is the same figure all state agencies were directed to use in developing their budgets.

Remediation

Howard's budget request includes a new line item: \$5 million for Idaho Standards Achievement Tests (ISAT) remediation programs.

The superintendent envisions the ISAT remediation programs mirroring the state's successful reading initiative by providing funds to districts to provide extra help to students who are not proficient in reading and math.

About 24 percent of fourth, eighth, and 10th graders scored

below "proficient" on the Spring 2003 ISAT in reading and math. This year, the state will add third and seventh graders to state testing and in 2005 fifth and sixth graders will be added.

To fund this request, Howard redirected \$2.5 million from the following programs: \$1 million from the least restrictive environment program, \$1 million for standards implementation, and \$500,000 from the state's reading initiative.

Howard said schools finished the implementation stage of standards and are now looking at using information to identify and help students who are behind.

She also noted that the reading initiative can be reduced because many teachers have taken the required Idaho Comprehensive Literacy course, which a part of the funding supported.

Annual Contract Support Program

Howard is asking lawmakers to restore \$2 million cut from last year's budget for the statutorily mandated Annual Contract Support Program, a program to assist teachers in their first three years of teaching.

Lawmakers cut funding for the required program last year, forcing districts to redirect dollars from classroom support to

offer the program.

Other expenditures

The increases are estimates for expenditures required by law:

\$1.9 million for property tax replacement
\$1.9 million for transportation

\$1 million for exceptional contracts and tuition equivalents
\$42,400 for incentives for teachers earning National Board Certification

\$4.7 million for safe and drug free schools programs

The budget also continues funding for the following state programs:

\$2.8 million for the reading initiative

\$450,000 for the Idaho Digital Learning Academy

\$4.85 million for limited English proficient students

\$500,000 for gifted and talented teacher training

State support

The budget request includes an estimated 2.0 percent increase in the support unit funding.

The increase is not expected to come from the state's general fund, but rather from increases in revenue generated from local property taxes.

CALENDAR

Administrators to meet Oct. 20-21

The Idaho Association of Elementary School Principals and the Idaho Association of Special Education Administrators will cosponsor "The Hats We Wear: The Multiple Roles of School Administrators" conference Oct. 20-21 in the Coeur d'Alene Inn.

For more information visit: http://www.idschadm.org/PDFs/ESP-SEA_AM.pdf

Curricular materials available for review

Newly adopted curricular materials will be showcased through out the state in October.

Earlier this year, the State Board of Education approved materials for math and professional technical education, and supplemental reading, reading intervention and limited English proficiency materials.

Educators and the public can review the materials at the following sites from noon to 5 p.m.:

Oct. 23, Lewiston, Red Lion Inn, 621 21st St., Seaport Club
Oct. 28, Boise, Holiday Inn, Boise Airport, 3300 Vista Ave.
Oct. 29, Twin Falls, West Coast Hotel, 1357 Blue Lakes Boulevard

Oct. 20, Idaho Falls, Shilo Inn, 780 Lindsay Boulevard
For more information contact Dr. Dan Prinzing of the State Department of Education (208) 332-6974.

STD/AIDS conference Oct. 23-24

"Integrating Efforts: Prevention, Care, and Education" is the theme of the 15th annual Sexually Transmitted Disease/AIDS Conference.

This event, sponsored by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare STD/AIDS Program and the Idaho Department of Education, will be held at Boise State University Oct. 23-24.

The conference will include an "education" track focusing on information and strategies critical to health educators and school nurses. For more information, visit <http://www.bthere.com/breg/hwconference>.

Data academies set for November

The State Department of Education will hold six "Fall Data Analysis Academies" in November. The two-day events begin at 8 a.m. each day. The schedule is:

Nov. 3-4: Red Lion Templin's, Post Falls, Region I
Nov. 5-6: University Inn, Moscow, Region II
Nov. 10-11: Shilo Inn, Idaho Falls, Region VI
Nov. 12-13: Red Lion Inn, Pocatello, Region V
Nov. 17-18: College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, Region IV
Nov. 19-20: Hilton Garden Inn, Boise, Region III

To register contact Karen Carlye at the State Department of Education 208-332-3807 or email her at kcarlye@sde.state.id.us or register online at <http://www.sde.state.id.us/admin/standards/>

School board conference Nov. 12-15

The Idaho School Board's Association will hold its annual conference Nov. 12-15 at the Coeur d'Alene Resort. For more information contact the association at (208) 854-1476 or visit: <http://www.idsb.org/>.

Nutrition, disease workshops set

"Teaching About Nutrition and Disease: Strategies for the Classroom" workshops will be held throughout November. The day-long workshop will focus on nutrient density, portion size, food choice, consumer skills, and activities to teach about communicable diseases.

Nov. 3 Coeur d'Alene, Coeur d'Alene Inn
Nov. 4 Moscow, University Inn
Nov. 10 Twin Falls, Red Lion Canyon Springs
Nov. 11 Boise, Ameritel Inn Boise Spectrum
Nov. 17 Idaho Falls, Red Lion on the Falls
Nov. 18 Pocatello, Red Lion Pocatello

The workshops align with Idaho's health standards. For information contact Barbara Eisenbarth at (208) 332-6950.

Course centers on helping youth thrive

"What Youth Need to Thrive, Not Just Survive in the 21st Century" is a workshop sponsored by the State Department of Education on Dec. 8 in Coeur d'Alene and Dec. 10, in Boise.

The daylong workshop features Jacquelyn G. Sowers, an expert with 40 years of experience.

The workshops align with Idaho's health standards. For information contact Barbara Eisenbarth at (208) 332-6950.

Mental, emotional health focus of class

"Teaching about Mental and Emotional Health: Strategies for the Classroom" is a workshop that will be offered in January and February by the State Department of Education.

The workshop will provide innovative and challenging strategies for teaching about mental and emotional health. The workshops will be held Jan. 26, Ameritel Inn Boise Spectrum, Boise; Feb. 2, Red Lion Inn, Pocatello; and Feb. 23, Coeur d'Alene Inn.

The workshops align with Idaho's health standards. For information contact Barbara Eisenbarth at (208) 332-6950.

Student assistance workshops sets

The Safe and Drug-free Schools program will sponsor several workshops across the state during the 2003-04 school year.

The schedule includes:

"Student Assistance Programs Facilitators Refresher Course":

Nov. 18, Twin Falls, Ameritel Hotel
Nov. 19, Boise, Ameritel Inn Boise Spectrum
Nov. 20, Pocatello, Holiday Inn
Nov. 21, Idaho Falls, Ameritel Inn
Dec. 4, Lewiston, Region Lion Inn
Dec. 5, Coeur d'Alene, Coeur d'Alene Inn

"Beginning Student Assistance Program/Support Group Training," June 14-16, Red Lion Hotel Downtown, Boise

"Advanced Student Assistance Program/Support Group Training," June 17-19, Red Lion Hotel Downtown, Boise

To register contact, Cheryl Watkins at 1 (602) 867-7851.

Rules

Continued from Page 1

A student's first opportunity to pass the ISAT would be in the spring of 10th grade. Students would be able to bank portions of the test they passed and retake other portions. The rule creates a provision for an appeal to a local board of trustees for those students, who may need to demonstrate mastery of standards in another manner.

No Child Left Behind: The proposal puts into board rule several pieces required by federal education law including:

§ Definition of proficiency levels on the ISAT;

§ Components for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP), including defining continuously enrolled students, setting participation rate for state testing, identifying populations to be monitored, establishing Safe Harbor criteria, and defining the appeals process for schools; and

§ Consequences for schools and districts not making AYP that begin with offering choice to students and end with possible state governance.

Rewards: The proposal includes a brief section on honoring schools, including identifying "exemplary," and "distinguished" schools that exceed standards.

In addition, the rule says schools and districts that improve overall scores of sub-populations or in the aggregate

by greater than 10 percent would be considered to have achieved Adequate Yearly Gain. Those schools and district would be eligible for an undefined award.

Teacher certification

In August, the State Board of Education scrapped for this rule-making season most of proposals developed during the past three years by its citizen's advisory group called Maximizing Opportunities for Students and Teachers (MOST).

The remaining proposed rules serve to make the state compliant with the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and address other state concerns. A section of the proposed rule dealing with alternative certification will expire in July 2006.

Changes in the rules include:

Assessments: New teachers will be required to pass approved content, pedagogy, and performance area assessment depending on their area of emphasis. The Professional Standards Commission will recommend assessments and qualifying scores to the board for approval.

Certification qualifications: The proposed rule specifies the criteria for certification and for endorsements.

Alternative certifications: The state's current system of nontraditional certification would change if this rule were approved. It proposes to allow

through July 1, 2006, the following limited approval certification options:

§ A 1-year consultant specialist certificate

§ A 1-year letter of authorization for individuals with a baccalaureate degree who are enrolled in a program to achieve full certification

§ A non-renewable one-year limited transitional letter of authorization for individuals with a K-6 or a 6-12 certificate. This would allow the individual who is teaching a grade level outside that certification to meet the requirements for the proper certification.

§ A Postsecondary Specialist Letter of Approval to allow teaching faculty at post secondary institutions to teach in public schools.

Alternative routes to certification: This section of the rule defines how individuals can become certified secondary school teachers without following the standard teacher education program.

This is intended for individuals who have a baccalaureate degree and have strong subject matter knowledge, but may not have the methodology training required.

Certification fees: This section incorporates recent legislation that moves the setting of fees for teaching certifications or licenses from the Idaho Code to State Board of Education rules.

Ag Days, Oct. 17, in Moscow.

This spring, UI made history when the world's first equine clone was born.

Children invited to make holiday ornaments

The Idaho students in grades K-12 are invited to create ornaments for the 2003 Holiday Tree at the U.S. Capitol and possibly win a trip to see the tree in Washington D.C. this December.

Criteria for the ornaments due Nov. 1 include:

§ Depict the theme: "From Idaho's Heart to America's Home"

§ Be lightweight, but able to endure winds and rain (weather-proof)

§ Be 9"-12" in size and come with heavy gauge 12" attached wire

§ Use reflective, colorful

materials-avoid dark, dull surfaces

§ Use three-dimensional effects for best viewing from all sides

§ Use a large, easy-to-view design (avoid small details)

§ Use durable materials (metal, wood, or recycled materials are best)

For more information about how to participate visit: www.capitolholidaytree2003.org/ or contact Dr. Peggy Wenner of the State Department of Education at pwenner@sde.state.id.us or 1(208) 332-6949.

All ornaments should include the name and city of the student. For an entry form visit: www.sde.state.id.us/instruct/docs/humanities/entryforms.pdf for each student. Two students' names will be drawn for a free trip to the lighting ceremony in Washington, D.C.

BRIEFS

Students invited to name cloned mule

MOSCOW - The University of Idaho is turning over the naming of its third mule clone foal to the school children of the state.

The university has developed a special website for children to learn about cloning and the Project Idaho mules - aptly named the Clone Zone at www.uidaho.edu/clonezone.

Here, students can find out what a clone is, how the research team created the clones and why animals are being cloned.

Also on the site is an entry form for children to submit a name for the third mule clone. The UI will announce the selected name and honor the student(s) who submitted the name, during its College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

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Delivering information you need, when you need it

By Allison Westfall
Public Information Officer
State Department of Education

As I prepare this "paper" version of News and Reports, I am struck by how much the department's communications with districts have evolved over time.

When I joined the department in 1998, we mailed or faxed most information to schools. We printed and distributed volumes of thick reports.

"News" updates on state reforms and activities were delivered by the department's liaisons, who traveled once a month to attend regional meetings, or were delivered through this newsletter mailed out once a quarter.

Our website was limited to explaining what the department did and who worked here.

Five years later, the department has come to rely on the "instant" communication that electronic medium provides.

We regularly use email and the web to transfer and collect data with schools. And it's more likely that you'll receive those once bulky reports on a trim CD-ROM.

Email provides an avenue to send educators information about decisions, policies, and reports the instant it is available.

We help educators and policy makers across the state keep track of latest news through a daily email summary of education articles from the Idaho's online newspapers and with a weekly "electron-

ic" email newsletter.

During the school year, we do a weekly "web" broadcast that features 10-minute interviews with education "news-makers."

Our website has become a great repository of information about schools from test scores for individual schools to copies of studies and research.

And this past September, we added a new communication tool to provide a "rapid response" in getting information to educators: a statewide conference call.

The call -- actually two calls -- with superintendents and charter school administrators was held to let everyone know about the pending release of adequate yearly progress (AYP) information and explain this first-ever report to administrators.

Initially, plans to notify folks about AYP plans involved drafting long detailed letters, then turning those into emails and faxes. Concerns still existed that with a project so new, several people would have lots of questions. So we decided on a conference call as a way to get information out quickly with a personal touch.

The calls went well considering there were more than 100 different sites on the line. Technology failed us as the department's email system crashed, preventing us from sending out some of the materials, but response from participants was mostly positive.

We also did our first ever conference call for reporters across the state to

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- A weekly email newsletter;

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- News releases via email.

All may be accessed on the SDE website at www.sde.state.id.us/dept under "news" or you can receive the information via email.

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explain the AYP information. They appreciated receiving the information at the same time and hearing questions asked by other reporters.

The calls were a handy way to talk with everyone at once about a pressing issue, but don't expect them to become routine.

At the department, we don't want to lose the personal touch with schools. We value the information that you can only get from two-way, face-to-face conversations.

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NEWS & REPORTS

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A message from the state superintendent

AYP reports provide first step

This year's Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll results point to a gap between what the public wants of its schools and what's actually happening.

The findings of the 35th annual poll done for the professional association for educators have been widely publicized. You can find the report in the September issue of the Phi Delta Kappan or on-line at www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kpollpdf.htm.

We all know that survey results depend on how questions are worded. Still, among the findings, these caught my attention:

§ Asked what level of government should have the greatest influence on local schools, 61 percent of respondents named local school boards, 22 percent state government, and 15 percent federal government. In reality, many of our recent decisions are dictated by the No Child Left Behind Act and the U.S. Department of Education's interpretations of the NCLB.

§ Among respondents, 84 percent said a school's performance should be judged on whether students improve over time. The NCLB bases that judgment on the percentage of students rated "proficient" in the tested material.

§ Nearly three-quarters of respondents think schools that need improvement should get help while students remain at the school. The NCLB says parents of children in "needs improvement" schools - schools that fail for two years to reach Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals - have the option to transfer their children elsewhere.

Idahoans will have a chance to think about that gap this month when the State Department of Education releases the 2003 list of schools that have not met AYP goals.

The measure of AYP rests on two foundations: the percentage of students taking the test (at least 95 percent of students enrolled in the school) and the percentage of students rated as "proficient" in reading (Idaho requires 66 percent this year) and in math (Idaho requires 51 percent).

The process of deciding which schools did or did not make AYP is com-



of academic progress.)

Why does it matter? A school that fails to make AYP for at least two years in a row is in jeopardy of being labeled "needs improvement," opening the way for transfers, supplemental educational services, and increasingly harsh penalties.

Because there are so many targets a school might miss, it's important that everyone at a school -- administrators, teachers, staff, and even volunteers -- understands exactly which goals were not met, what that means, and what the school is doing to improve.

It's important to remember that this first year forms the baseline against which we can measure future progress. It's a snapshot in time, and it will change from year to year.

Once local districts review and correct reports from last year's spring testing, we will put the final document on the SDE's website (www.sde.state.id.us/Dept) for everyone to see.

We have an idea what to expect. Back when the first scores for the then-new Idaho Reading Indicator were released, there was a lot of hand-wringing, second-guessing, and criticism - a big whoop-de-do over results of one test. Now, several years later, scores are up, teachers are more confident about instructional strategies, and struggling students are getting the help they need.

I expect this Adequate Yearly Progress reporting to follow the same path - unless, of course, the public begins to notice the difference between what it says it wants for schools and what the federal law requires. And it would be a shame to abandon the No Child Left Behind Act in its entirety, because it includes elements that help us focus on improving student performance.

So let's take this first year of AYP reporting for what it is: a starting point, and a good road map for where we want to go.

plex. Because the requirements apply to the student body as a whole, and then to each of several subgroupings of students, schools must meet 36 different goals, and missing even one means the school will not make AYP.

For example, the 95 percent participation rate applies to the school's entire enrollment and then to various smaller groups (students with disabilities, limited English proficient students, disadvantaged students, and various ethnic groupings). If a school has 10 disadvantaged students and two are absent on testing day, the entire school will fail to make AYP.

The same is true for the academic measure. If only 50 of 100 students earn "proficient" scores in math, the entire school will be designated as not making AYP. (Any group of fewer than 34 students will not be counted in the measure